

## Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1832

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

JXCONSUL BOMBAY 9535

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 14117

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT,

SUBJECT: TRENDS IN MRS.GANDHI'S PHILOSOPHY REGARDING THE  
EMERGENCY

SUMMARY: WE HAVE REVIEWED ALL OF MRS. GANDHI'S PUBLIC  
STATEMENTS DATING FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION OF  
JUNE 26. THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES THOSE STATEMENTS  
AND DISCUSSES THEIR IMPLICATIONS RE THE PRIME MINISTER'S  
OWN PHILOSOPHY TOWARD THE EMERGENCY. END SUMMARY.

1. A REVIEW OF MRS. GENDHI'S STATEMENTS ON THE EMERGENCY  
SINCE PRESIDENT AHMED'S JUNE 26 PROCLAMATION REVEALS THAT  
HER PUBLIC JUSTIFICATIONS CONTINUE TO REVOLVE AROUND THE  
FOLLOWING THEMES: (A) SHE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE EXCEPT THE  
EMERGENCY TO CHECK THE OPPOSITION-SPONSORED VIOLENCE,  
ILLEGAL AGITATIONS AND DISRUPTIONS THAT WERE SLOWLY  
ERODING THE BASIS OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY; (B) A SLOW,  
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DEVELOPING CHAOS - SET IN MOTION BY THE OPPOSITION - WAS

ENCOURAGING "DANGER FROM OUTSIDE," THUS SERIOUSLY  
THREATENING THE INTEGRITY, STABILITY AND UNITY OF INDIA; (C)  
WHILE A DEMOCRATIC FRAMEWORK WITH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SHOULD BE  
PRESERVED, ONLY THROUGH A FRESHLY CHARGED ATMOSPHERICS OF DISCIPLINED ORDER, REFORM AND REINVIGORATED DIRECTION CAN IMPEDIMENTS  
TO PRODUCTION AND ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT IN THE COUNTRY BE REMOVED.

2. THE BASIC CONTINUITY IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S PUBLIC  
JUSTIFICATIONS OF THE EMERGENCY CONTRACTS WITH A MARKED  
EVOLUTION IN HER EMOTIONAL STATE AND IN HER PUBLICLY  
ANNOUNCED INTENTIONS OVER THE PAST FOUR MONTHS. THE WORRY,  
TENSION, URGENCY AND COMPRISING POSTURE CHARACTERIZING  
HER POSITION IN THE WEEKS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE  
PROCLAMATION HAVE FADED. SO HAS THE WORN, PRESSURED AND

TIRED APPEARANCE SHE PRESENTED TO PRIVATE AND PUBLIC  
AUDIENCES IN THOSE EARLY WEEKS.

3. IN THE WEEKS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING OWE PROCLAMATION,  
THE PRIME MINISTER OFFERED LITTLE HOPE FOR AN EARLY SLACK-  
ENING OF A RISING TIDE OF GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL

LIBERTIES, POLITICAL AND PRESS AVSUTIEUS.#

SHE SAID  
FLATLY ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT SHE WOULD NOT  
ALLOW THE OPPOSITION TO COME TO POWER AND THEREBY ENDANGER  
INDIAN UNITY AND SECURITY. SHE HELD HER PEACE AS GOI  
MINISTERS AND SENIOR CONGRESS COLLEAGUES EXPELLED HER  
AS THE ONLY POSSIBLE ANSWER TO THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL  
AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. SHE AND HER SPOKESMEN AT THE  
CENTER AND IN THE STATES HAMMERED CONSTANTLY AT THE THREAT  
POSED TO THE NATION BY EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL THREATS OR

CONSPIRACIES. HER LAW MINISTER IN PARLIAMENT ANNOUNCED THAT  
THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION HAD FAILED TO SUIT THE IMPERATIVDS  
OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN INDIA.

4. FOUR MONTHS OF DOMESTIC CALM, LACK OF EFFECTIVE  
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OPPOSITION TO HER CONSOLIDATION OF POWER, THE APPARENT  
PUBLIC ACQUIESCENCE IN AND EVEN SATISFACTION AT THE  
INCREASED DISCIPLINE ORDER AND DIRECTION PRODUCED BY

THE EMERGENCY SEEM TO HAVE TEMPERED MRS. GANDHI'S  
ANXIETIES AND WORRIES, THOUGH SHE IS STILL OCCASIONALLY  
TESTY WITH INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWERS, IN PUBLIC APPEARANCES,  
SHE IS MORE SELF-CONFIDENT AND AT EASE. SHE PUBLICLY

ATTRIBUTED THE LACK OF RESISTANCE TO THE EMERGENCY AS EVIDENCE OF THE WEAK POPULAR SUPPORT FOR OPPOSITION PARTIES.

SHE SPEAKS

CONFIDENTLY OF ELECTIONS IN THE UNSPECIFIED FUTURE. SHE INCREASINGLY REFERS TO RETENTION OF THE BASIC FEATURES OF THE CONSTITUTION AND THE INDIAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS, INCLUDING OPPOSITION PARTIES AND A SEPARATE JUDICIARY. SPECULATION BY PREVIOUS MINISTERS AND CONGRESS LEADERS ON CHANGES IN THESE AREAS HAS ENDED. AN OCTOBER 6 PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT "DEMOCRACY IS IMPORTANT NOT JUST AS AN IDEAL, BUT BECAUSE IN A COUNTRY OF INDIA'S SIZE AND VAST DIVERSITY IT IS THE ONLY SYSTEM IN MY VIEW WHICH CAN KEEP THE COUNTRY TOGETHER." IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF HER PERIODIC REITERATIONS OF A PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY.

5. SINCE JUNE 26, THERE HAS BEEN A NOTABLE CONSISTENCY IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S INSISTENCE THAT THERE WILL NEVER BE A RETURN TO THE INDISCIPLINE, LACK OF RESPONSIBILITY, AND "LAXITY" THAT WEAKENED INDIA'S PROSPECTS FOR ADVANCEMENT AND THREATENED INDIA DEMOCRACY BEFORE THE EMERGENCY. SHE MADE THIS CLEAR IN A SEPTEMBER 22 INTERVIEW WITH DANISH EDITOR PAUL S. NIELSSEN WHEN SHE STATED, "WHAT THE EMERGENCY HAS DONE IS TO SHAKE THE NATION. EVEN THOSE WHO WERE INVOLVED IN SOME . . . UNDESIRABLE ACTIVITIES HAVE A FEELING THAT WE HAD GONE TOO FAR AND IT WAS TIME TO CALL A HALT. SO THAT IS THE MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT. A GREAT DEAL OF DISCIPLINE HAS COME. IT IS NOT AN ENFORCED DISCIPLINE, NOWHERE HAVE THE POLICE OR EVEN PARTY PEOPLE GONE AND SAID 'YOU MUST DO THIS.' BUT THE VERY FACT THAT PEOPLE STARTED THINKING, 'WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?' HAS BROUGHT AN ATMOSPHERE

OF DISCIPLINE AND WE WANT THIS DISCIPLINE TO BECOME A PART OF NATIONAL LIFE."

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6. IN TUNE WITH HER ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTIFICATION OF THE EMERGENCY - AND PERHAPS ALSO WITH A VIEW TO USE THE EMERGENCY TO RESURRECT HER POLITICAL CREDIBILITY - MRS. GANDHI HAS SINCE JUNE 26 USED PUBLIC PLATFORMS TO EMPHASIZE IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC REFORM MEASURE. HER STATEMENTS HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THE OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME (BY NEXT JULY) OF HER 20-POINT ECONOMIC PROGRAM. GOI NEWS RELEASES REPORT HER ---- INSTRUCTIONS TO CONGRESS STATE LEADERS TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT LAND REFORMS. SHE HAS CALLED ON STUDENTS FOR A GREATER WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH THEIR HANDS. SHE HAS ALSO TENTATIVELY CALLED FOR A CONGRESS PARTY CONFERENCE IN DECEMBER, PRESUMABLY TO INJECT NEW VIGOR INTO THE PARTY'S ORGANIZATION.

7. MRS. GANDHI HAS PROCLAIMED HER SUPPORT FOR THE JUDICIARY IN INDIA AND AVOWED HER RESPECT FOR THE SUPREME COURT, WHILE

AT THE SAME TIME INSISTING THAT IN THE INDIAN CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM, THE PARLIAMENT IS SUPREME OVER THE COURTS. SHE HAS CONSISTENTLY DENIED IN PUBLIC THAT HER COURT CASE HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH HER DECISION ON THE EMERGENCY OR HAS ANY BEARING ON WHEN SHE WILL END THE EMERGENCY OR CALL NEW ELECTIONS. VIRTUALLY NO POLITICALLY SENSITIVE PERSON IN INDIA APPEARS TO TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY. SHE HAS SHIFTED HER POSITION ON THE QUESTION OF RESIGNATION IN RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS ON THE COURT CASE. EARLY IN THE EMERGENCY PERIOD SHE COMMENTED SEVERAL TIMES THAT SHE HAD THOUGHT SERIOUSLY ABOUT RESIGNING. MORE RECENTLY SHE HAS CATEGORICALLY DENIED THAT SHE EVER CONTEMPLATED STEPPING DOWN AS PRIME MINISTER. WE FIND THE LATTER VERSION PERSUASIVE\*

8. CONCLUSION: THE VAGUENESS AND INDEFINITENESS OF MRS. GANDHI'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE UNRESOLVED COURT CASE ARE THE PRIMARY REASONS FOR THE UNCERTAINTY OF INDIAN POLITICIANS AS TO WHAT SHE WILL DO IN THE COMING MONTHS ABOUT ELECTIONS AND A CONTINUATION OF THE EMERGENCY. SHE SEEMS COMMITTED TO CONSTITUTIONALISM AND DEMOCRACY IN SOME FORM, BUT IS INSISTENT THAT

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DEMOCRACY ESSENTIALLY REFERS ONLY TO PARTICIPATION BY THE "PEOPLE," THAT THE PARLIAMENT CAN CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION AS IT WISHES, AND THAT DEMOCRACY MUST BE ORDERLY AND DISCIPLINED. WHATEVER MRS. GANDHI DOES IN THE MONTHS AHEAD WILL BE DEFINED BY HER AS BOTH CONSTITUTIONAL AND DEMOCRATIC. AT THIS POINT, PARTICULARLY WHILE HER COURT CASE REMAINS ALIVE, IT IS OUR IMPRESSION SHE HAS NOT REACHED ANY CONCLUSIONS AS TO WHAT SHE WILL DO. WHATEVER HER DECISIONS, THEY WILL BE CALCULATED TO MAINTAIN HERSELF IN POWER AND TO TIGHTEN THE FUNCTIONING OF THE "SYSTEM." SAXBE

NOTE BY OC/T: # AS RECEIVED.

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